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CAMBODIA: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA: The South Vietnamese task force that led the recent drive to reopen Route 7 has returned to South Vietnam.

US military officials in Saigon report that the last of the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN) troops that were involved in the road clearing operation west of Kompong Cham city have been airlifted to nearby Tay Ninh Province.

The job of keeping Route 7 clear now reverts to the Cambodians. There already is some evidence that they still are not prepared to fulfill this task. The US defense attaché reports, for example, that government positions along the road between Skoun and Kompong Cham appear to be poorly constructed and located. Additionally, several Cambodian units apparently have made no attempt to set up defensive positions and are simply living in nearby villages.

In other military developments, the situation in the southwest along Route 4 continues to deteriorate. The Communists probed government positions east of the Pich Nil pass yesterday, while elements of several government battalions southwest of the pass remain isolated. Enemy troops now control another section of Route 4, from its junction with Route 18 southward to Stung Chhay.

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SOUTH KOREA: Following on the recent cabinet shake-up, President Pak Chong-hui has made hierarchical changes in his Liberal Democratic Party to tighten further the administration's machinery for next year's elections.

In a move to inject proven talent and yet maintain balance among competing party factions, a triumvirate of special advisers to party president Pak has been created. Prominent in this new lineup is Kim Chong-pil, the highly capable presidential aspirant whose ambitions last year led to a temporary falling out with Pak and eclipse from office. The other members of the trio of advisers are Yun Chi-yong, leader of the anti - Kim Chong-pil faction, and Chong Il-kwon, former premier and well-liked neutral. This neat balance is intended by Pak to prevent any of the three from developing an excessive power base of his own in the coming period.

To box in Kim Chong-pil even more, the other party posts, which have also changed hands, are predominantly held by individuals opposed to him. Kim Chong-pil, while obviously unhappy at these constraints, apparently is resigned to working within the system while keeping a calculating eye on the future.

Rounding out the party mechanism, a new 15-man Party Affairs Committee--whose members are responsible for bringing in the vote in individual provinces or special city areas--reflects the careful attention to geographic politics evident in the selection of the recent cabinet appointments.

Thus, with these changes in the party and cabinet, and the appointment of the controversial but effective Yi Hu-rak as director of the South Korean Central Intelligence Agency, President Pak seems to have fashioned a high-powered election team, yet one that remains directly responsive to his control.

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IRAN-IRAQ: Tehran claims it has neutralized an Iraqi plot to overthrow the Iranian Government.

This latest in a series of mutual harassments, which have kept Tehran and Baghdad openly hostile for several years, has led to the arrest of some 40 persons in Iran alleged to have been part of Baghdad's plot. In a press conference held last week, Iranian Prime Minister Hoveyda had revealed details of the plan, allegedly begun by former intelligence chief Teimur Bakhtiar with the support of the Iraqi Government, the outlawed Iranian Communist Party and dissident students. Bakhtiar was reported to have been assassinated in Iraq last summer, but an Iranian spokesman claimed that Bakhtiar's wife re-established contact between Baghdad and the alleged plotters in Iran after her husband's death.

The plot reportedly included plans to sabotage important Iranian installations in Tehran and the provinces, and to mount guerrilla activities in several provinces. Top court and government officials were targeted for assassination.

News of the coup plot came almost a year after an unsuccessful Iranian-backed coup attempt in Iraq. At that time, both countries put their armed forces on alert, expelled ambassadors and consular staffs and moved troops to the border, but neither side provoked further action. It is unlikely that the current situation will lead to open hostility either, but the two countries can be expected to continue their border harassment, propaganda, and subversive efforts.

The Iranian Government is still smarting over student rioting which forced the closing of three universities over the Christmas period. Disclosure of the conspiracy may help to reinforce the government's contention that student disturbances were

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instigated by outside subversive elements--"international Communism" and Iraq, and to illustrate that Iran's security organization is sufficiently vigilant and efficient to counteract any threat.

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RHODESIA: The country's two insurgency movements are drifting aimlessly and are likely to remain inactive for some time.

The Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), the largest and most active of the two Zambia-based groups, and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), an organization of only a few hundred Rhodesian exiles, have been negotiating for several months to form a united front. Because of deep-seated distrust between the two groups and factional strife within ZAPU itself, the talks are dragging. [redacted]

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both sides have agreed not to undertake any guerrilla operations until the united front negotiations are completed.

Probably neither group is anxious to mount operations in any case, because of the trouble each has had in penetrating Rhodesia's security screen. ZAPU has been largely inactive since late 1968, except for a surprise attack on a border police post and the Victoria Falls airport last January. ZANU has undertaken no guerrilla operations in the last four or five years and is now essentially a political movement. Even if a united front is formed, therefore, the effectiveness of these small insurgent groups will not be significantly improved. [redacted]

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INTERNATIONAL OIL: Resolutions recently adopted by the ten-member Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are causing apprehension on the part of the major international oil companies and the principal oil importing countries.

Both radical and moderate members together called for an across-the-board increase in the price on which taxes are based, a minimum tax rate of 55 percent, and revision of prices to reflect changes in the exchange rate of any convertible currencies. They also will attempt to eliminate the disparity in crude oil prices from different sources by using Libyan prices as a base and adjusting for geographical locations and unit weights of crude oil. Member states of OPEC are Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Libya, Algeria, Indonesia, and Venezuela.

A committee was appointed to begin negotiations with western-owned companies in Tehran in mid-January.

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NOTES

SOUTH VIETNAM: The Communists' self-imposed three-day New Year cease-fire begins at noon today, Washington time, while the allied 24-hour military standdown will begin early tomorrow morning. The Communists will probably generally abide by their announced truce as they did at Christmas. The usual minor violations occurred at that time, but even those were fewer than in any of the five previous Christmas-time standdowns. Evidence continues to accumulate, however, that enemy units are likely to be more active following the holiday truces.

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New Year Cease-Fire

Communist

Begins
Ends

Saigon
Dec. 31-0100
Jan. 3-0100

Washington
Dec.30-1200
Jan. 2-1200

Allied

Begins
Ends

Dec. 31-1800
Jan. 1-1800

Dec. 31-0500
Jan. 1-0500

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GUINEA: President Toure has expelled most if not all West German aid technicians, reflecting an apparent conviction that they figured prominently among the foreign elements he believes are threatening his regime. The expulsion decree, carried out swiftly by armed Guineans, follows a request last week for the recall of the West German ambassador who left yesterday. Bonn has indicated that even now it has no intention of severing relations, but would not be surprised if Toure did so. Bonn has received reports that it was the East Germans who turned Toure against them. In any event, the expulsion effectively ends the West German aid program, which has totaled over \$22 million since 1960.

* * * *

TURKEY: A new wave of student violence has aroused growing public anxiety and could give the government the support it needs to clamp down on student agitators. Recent incidents have involved gunfire, bombs, molotov cocktails, and student fatalities. Several crude bombs narrowly missed the Prime Minister's motorcade last week, although Demirel himself was not believed to have been the target. In the latest incident, two Turkish policemen guarding the US Embassy in Ankara were wounded early Tuesday morning by semiautomatic weapons believed by police to have been fired by radical students.

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